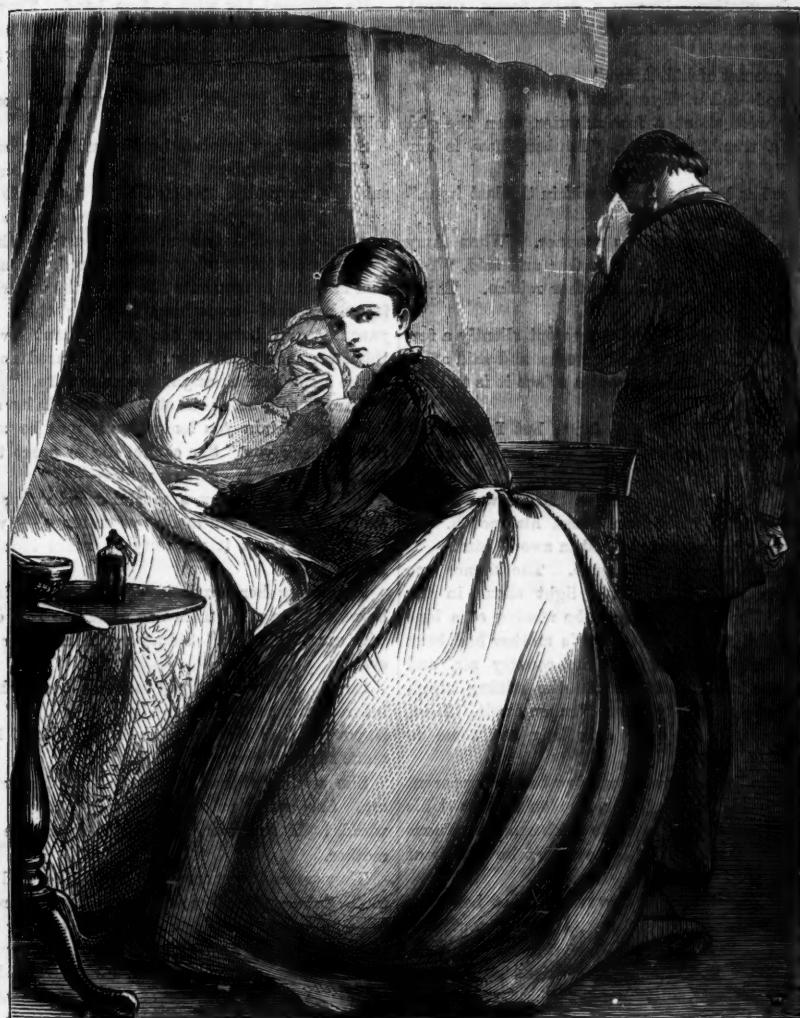


THE WIVES & R

Saturday, December 11, 1869.



"Mother, I will tell you. It is Sidney Peters!"—p. 147.

IN DUTY BOUND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN," "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "A BRAVE LIFE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.—AMY'S SECRET.

THE train stopped at a little out-of-the-way station, in the bleak, open country. Amy alighted on the platform just as a young man, in the dress of a clergyman, came up to meet her.

"Amy, you are come, then. You have been prompt."

"Yes, Reuben; of course I came."

"Is this all your luggage?"

"Yes, Reuben, dear. I did not know how long—"

"Exactly. Now, Amy, I will carry the bag. Can you walk?"

"Oh, yes."

"Come along, then."

Nothing more was said, and the two walked briskly out of the station. It was a dark, foggy, dismal night, and the stretch of open country looked very uninviting.

"You are not afraid, Amy?"

"Oh, no!—not with you, dear."

"They were silent a few minutes, then the girl said, in a trembling voice, "Reuben, how is our mother?"

"There has been no change within the last hour," replied Reuben, gravely.

He had a grave, serious manner. When Amy gave a little sob, he turned to her and said, "You should not weep, Amy, but rather rejoice. Think how she has suffered."

"I know—I know!" and Amy wept silently a few moments. Then she dried her eyes and said affectionately, "Dear Reuben, what a solace it is to have you here!"

"I felt it right to come, Amy; but I must not stay. The vicar is absent, and the whole work of the parish is on my shoulders."

He had rather a stern manner. There was a firm—almost a hard expression about his mouth. It was evident that his sister stood in awe of him.

She walked on again in silence. The silence was not broken until a twinkling light shone in the distance. The light was from the window of a lone house in the fields. Here Amy's mother had been brought for the benefit of the country air, and because she could not exist in the stifling atmosphere of the great city where Reuben dwelt. Here, as it happened, the poor sick lady had come to die.

When the light from the window became apparent through the fog and darkness, Reuben slackened his pace. The girl's heart began to throb in a tumultuous and agitated manner. She knew what he was about to say.

"Amy," said the stern, grave man at her side, "before we enter yonder house, I have somewhat to say to you."

His manner was solemn and impressive. It was so at all times. The life he led fostered this solemnity. His lot was cast amid crowded neighbourhoods, where humanity toiled, struggled, suffered, and died.

Amy had not replied to his speech. Her eyes were cast down, and a crimson flush had risen to her cheek. It was a subject on which she dreaded to enter with her brother Reuben.

"Amy, it is time that I, as your natural guardian and protector, was made acquainted with your actual position; nor would it be consistent with your filial duty to allow our mother to depart with this mystery

unsolved. What is the name of the man whom you have promised to marry?"

Nothing could be plainer or more pointed than the question. Amy did not answer it; she walked on in silence.

He detained her with a firm hand. They stood on the dark, solitary road, nothing in sight save the twinkling lamp in the sick woman's chamber; none to overhear them but God!

"I will not let you proceed, Amy, until you have told me."

She knew how resolute he was, and she trembled.

"I have promised, Reuben—I have promised," said she, hurriedly. "Can I break my word?"

"Yes, if your promise was an error, and will lead you into evil—if duty commands you to break it."

"I dare not!" and she shuddered. Something told her—for in moments like these the veil was rent from her eyes—something told her there was a yawning gulf between her gay, gallant lover and this stern man beside her; and she dared not think of the steps Reuben might choose to take.

"Amy," said he, as she still persisted in her silence, "I cannot detain you longer, or it may be too late. She will ask you. She cannot die in peace till you have told her. If you still refuse——"

"Well?" said Amy, a mortal dread at her heart; for the pause Reuben made was ominous,—"well?"

"I shall think it my duty to make inquiries of Lady Peters."

She wrung her hands in despair. Oh, this would be worse than all! This was what she had dreaded with exceeding fear. Sidney might cast her off for ever!

Stay! He had once said to her, when she had put before him a case like this—he had said, "Of course, if your mother is actually on her death-bed, I might make some concession."

She would whisper her secret in her mother's ear. She would not tell Reuben. Oh, no! not for worlds! If she must explain, it should be to her mother.

They entered the house. At least, she would see her mother alone. Her face was white; her eyes troubled; her whole demeanour agitated. Her brother did not unbend to her. It had been better, perhaps, if he had. His behaviour was rather chilling and repelling. He hated this ban of secrecy; he was open and truthful as the day. Only evil "lurks in hidden corners," he would say; and the presence of evil once suspected, he would probe it down to the very root!

Their mother had been asking for Amy repeatedly. The dying woman knew that her hours were numbered. She did not fear to die. She was of that happy company who have made their peace with God. Her life had passed through great tribulation, and now there shone before her the crown of victory. But the mother's heart clung to Amy. She longed

to have this one barrier removed; this withheld confidence restored. Her eyes, dim though they were, asked the question as the girl entered—

"Who is he, Amy—who?"

Amy sat down by the bedside. Her limbs trembled; her heart swelled almost to bursting. She kissed the dear face, so pallid, so sunk, so death-like, and yet so full of loving, anxious tenderness. She laid her weary head upon the pillow; she felt for the moment as if she would faint have died too!

"Amy," came the faltering whisper—a whisper faint indeed, but clear and distinct, "Amy, will you not tell even now?"

No one was there. She had glanced hurriedly round.

"Mother, darling, if I tell you, it must not be repeated. I have promised, dear. All will go wrong if it is blazoned abroad too soon."

The eager eyes were fixed upon her, and the lips moved. She could catch the faint sound of words, still imploring her to tell. How could she resist? How could she let her mother die, and not in peace? Would not the remembrance haunt her many a day?

No, no! it was a desperate alternative; if it robbed her of her love, her heart would break. But she must risk all; and she bowed her head, and placed her lips to her mother's ear.

"Mother, I will tell you. It is Sidney Peters!"

A deep but suppressed groan made her turn quickly and fearfully round. The groan came from Reuben—her brother Reuben!

CHAPTER XXVII.

HORACE TAKES MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS.

THERE are some moments in life when a man is stunned, and feels as though the tide of events must go by unstemmed. Such moments do not last when the man is young, and the soul is full of energy and purpose. He rises, looks round, it may be sadly, but with the resolve to meet the difficulty and overcome it. Such was the case with Horace Vincent. He was stunned. He felt that his marriage had been a mistake; that his happiness would be wrecked; that, unless he strove mightily, his fortunes would be wrecked as well. But he rose, resolved, if possible, to meet and turn aside the giant wave that was approaching.

He looked very haggard. He seemed older, by many years, than he did since we first knew him. And he had to think some time before he could arrive at any satisfactory conclusion.

At length the conclusion came. He had reckoned up the bills many times, as though the process might have reduced the total to a less alarming amount. But there it was, neither greater nor smaller.

Well, he must meet it. He unlocked a small cash-box, and took out some money. There was not

much left when he had done so, but that fact was beyond his control.

He would settle these accounts, and then he knew what he would do. His face had a certain sternness about it. He was driven to a kind of desperation. She was young, but, then, how reckless! It was too expensive a process to wait until experience came. He must take the reins out of those incompetent hands, and govern for himself. He would rather not have taken the step he was planning. It grieved him to the heart. When he entered his home, so recently fitted up to be the abode of domestic joy, and remembered how soon his hopes had been crushed, he could have wept.

The tea was waiting for him. He glanced round the untidy room, and at the book Ruth had just laid down, and also at her serene, smiling face, calm as ever. He had been racked with anxiety; she had been reading her novel without a pang!

"I must give up the subscription to that library," he said, as he sat down. "There is scarcely a book in it worth the reading."

"How you talk, Horace! I should be moped to death without my novels."

That was just the point at which he was aiming. But he bided his time. He did not wish to introduce the subject otherwise than kindly and courteously; and he had much to say to her that evening.

When tea was over, and the door had closed behind the servant, he began. Ruth had taken her novel again, and was settling herself in her old place, her feet on the fender.

"Ruth, do you never sew?" asked he, rather abruptly.

"I do sometimes," she replied, her eyes fixed on her book.

"You will oblige me by laying down your book, Ruth; I want to have a little talk with you."

"Well," she said, curtly, and closing her book, indeed, but keeping her finger in it as a marker.

"You neither like sewing nor housekeeping, it seems to me, Ruth."

"You forget that I was only a governess."

"True."

And he was silent a moment. When he began again it was in a softer tone. He might have been unjust to her. Had he not married her with his eyes open? Was it not his fault as much as hers?

"Ruth, I have been thinking what will be best for us to do. The cares of a household, and its varied duties, are not to your taste. Well, suppose you lay them aside; suppose we go into lodgings."

"What! back again to that poky little room of Mrs. Perkins?"

"No, dear, fortunately there is no necessity for that. An old servant, who married from our house years ago—that is, from my father's house, Ruth—has been left a widow, and is come to settle in East

Bramley. She has rooms to let, and I think they will just suit us."

Ruth made no reply. He could not see her face, it was turned towards the fire.

"I know what I shall do. The circumstance seems providential. A gentleman has been inquiring for a furnished house; I happened to see the advertisement. Now, if all goes well, he may be glad to take this house off our hands just as it is. I do not think we can do better, Ruth."

She did not answer. He moved a little, so that he could catch a glimpse of her face. The obstinate expression was settling rapidly over it. Still he went on.

"Then we can take possession of Jane Wilson's comfortable lodgings; they are very pleasant rooms indeed, Ruth; and Jane can cook, and market, and keep house, and the little wife will have no more trouble."

He waited for a response to this speech, but none came.

"What do you say to it, Ruth?"

"I shall not go!" she replied shortly, and almost rudely.

"But if I wish it, dear—if this step will be the only means of saving me from serious embarrassment?"

"You should allow me more money, Horace. I had no idea that you were such a screw."

It was the second time that she had used the expression. He was annoyed, but he passed over it. The beginning of strife was, he knew, like the letting out of water. He repeated to her that he was not rich; that, in fact, owing to her ignorance of household management, and her too great expenditure, he was fast drifting into difficulties. He softened the facts by telling her that she was young, and that time would work wonders. He did not wish to be harsh and discouraging, but her education in these matters must be conducted on a less costly scale. She would have opportunities of learning, without the responsibility, and without risk of failure.

He thought he had put it before her as clearly and as fairly as possible; and he looked for the obstinate expression to give way. But it lingered, and in full force.

She had no idea, she said, of going into lodgings now she was married. She always thought that women, when they were married, had no more trouble about money. Their husbands gave them as much as they wanted.

He could not disabuse her of this idea, and after a time he left off trying. But then another phase of his domestic life became apparent—Ruth was sulky. He would have liked to carry on the discussion in a friendly spirit, and when it was over, to spend a domestic evening; but in this hope he was mistaken. Ruth sat over the fire, not reading to be

sure, but in a state of gloom and depression. Once or twice he saw the tears trickling down her face, and he went to her and tried to comfort her. But she would not speak!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PROMPT MEASURES.

THE office in which Horace transacted his business had, as we hinted before, become to him a refuge; nay, he was beginning to regard it as a kind of home. Here he laid his plans, and took cognisance of his position, and even was wont to hug his sorrows. For that sorrow, in its worst form, was coming upon him, there was little room to doubt.

He had hoped that, by the morning, Ruth would have regained her good temper; for on this sole characteristic he had rested much of his hope.

"At least, Ruth has an even temper," he had said to himself many a time. And he had tried to contrast her favourably with more gifted women, who had an infirmity of the opposite nature.

But this favourite theory was in danger of being upset. Ruth had not regained her serenity. Her usually smiling face was overcast. She was sullen, and refused to speak except in monosyllables. He had to leave her in this mood, and betake himself to the business of the day. He had grown firmer and a trifle sterner. He meant to carry his purpose, in spite of a sullen humour and a few black looks.

"It is this step or ruin!" he said to himself.

As soon as he could, he sallied forth in quest of Jane Wilson's lodgings. And here, for a brief space, his troubled heart found a kind of peace.

The good woman had known him from a child. She was secretly displeased that her young master had not married a "lady born;" but still she was quite willing to receive him into her house; and it was a quiet abode, just what he liked. Its cleanliness and order, after his own disorderly home, were refreshing. He began to think that, after all, his affairs were not quite desperate; that in this retreat, free from the cares and duties which seemed to embarrass her, Ruth, too, might be happy.

The woman knew how it was, but she held her peace. "He don't break up his home for nothing," said she, when he was gone. "I'll be bound that girl he's married don't know her right hand from her left!"

The rest of Horace's business was soon transacted. To be sure, he sighed to think how quickly he had unbuilt his home; but, according to the house-agent who managed the affair, he had been most fortunate.

"It is not often a furnished house is wanted in East Bramley," said the man of business. "The gentleman has brought his wife to consult Dr.

Manton. She is an invalid; and, after all, the air is very bracing, as I tell him, and the society good, and he might have come to a worse place."

Horace scarcely heard this remark. He was in a hurry to be gone, and he was wondering how best he should break the intelligence to Ruth. As he crossed the market-place he met Miss Easton. She was on foot, and had her cardcase in her hand. She stopped at once, and addressed him with her usual cordiality.

"I have been making another attempt, and been unsuccessful," said she; "I am very sorry."

He knew what she meant. She had been calling on Ruth, and been again refused.

Some time ago such a thing would have vexed and wounded him; for he was certain that Ruth was at home. But he was like a man who only hopes to save his life from the wreck. This treasure and that must needs sink without an effort to regain them.

"I cannot have what I wished for," he thought, as, after a few moments' conversation, he passed on; "pleasant converse with friends—domestic happiness. These things are drifting fast away. If I can steer clear of ruin—if I can save my honour from the wreck—this is all!"

His lips were compressed as he said it, and the expression of his face was that of a disappointed man. But the fact, that once again Miss Easton's friendly overtures had been refused, appeared in the light of a trifle.

He did not reach his home till tea-time. He had had a great deal of business to go through, and on such hard-pressed days he would dine at his office. Ruth never seemed to mind about this in the least.

He thought she would have quite recovered—that the cloud would have passed, and he should see again the serene and smiling countenance which had promised so much happiness and content. But there was a quiet persistence about Ruth, of which he little recked. The cloud was there just the same.

He was changed. He did not accost her tenderly, and soothe and caress her, as he might have done some little time ago. He was displeased, and words of affection did not come so readily. He was losing his respect for her character. It was as if there had been a slip of the foundations: the building had become less secure.

"The foolish woman plucketh down her house with her hands."

He came gravely and silently to the meal which should have been so social. She poured out his tea, and pushed it towards him. Her want of courtesy seemed to widen the breach. She had her book by her, and read it industriously. He thought she did it to provoke him; but he made no remark. By-and-by he would have his say, whether or no.

Is this the sweet gentle girl, his companion and his solace?

Is she not rude, ill-tempered, and unkind? Is not the match unequal? Will it not be a yoke to gall both of them?

But affection was not dead yet. It lingered, and, ere long, made itself heard. His heart relented as he looked at her, and thought again how young she was, and recalled her early training, and her total inexperience. And he thought of his last attempt to save the vessel from destruction, and hoped it would succeed, and that happy days might be in store even for them.

Thinking thus, he came and sat beside her. Tea was over, and she had placed herself on the sofa, her book in her hand.

His first overture of reconciliation was to put his arm round her. He wanted that there should be peace. He wanted her to be affectionate and loving, and the sharer of his plans for their mutual benefit. But, however he might feel, her heart was obdurate. She got up and moved to the table. Then, resting her head on her hand, she continued reading, as for her life.

"Ruth, I am sorry you avoid me."

He said it gently, and as if he were still open to concession. She did not answer a word.

"I want to tell you the result of my day's work, Ruth, if you will listen."

This was said in firmer tones, and as if he were getting angry.

"I hear you," she replied, her eyes on her book.

"You must prepare to remove from here, Ruth. The house is taken."

He would have said it far more gently, if he had not been provoked. As it was, the words sounded harsh and abrupt.

She made a little movement, as though she were taken by surprise.

He added directly, for the man's heart was tender as a woman's—

"But you need not be uneasy, Ruth; I have provided a home that I am sure you will like, and where you will have no cares to worry you. I have taken the rooms that I spoke of, and we can go there directly."

The veins of her neck swelled. He could see this as he sat.

"It is like your mean ways to bring me down to lodgings!"

"Ruth!"

Her choked voice and fierce look astonished him. He thought Ruth, his own Ruth was gone, and this other creature come instead.

His anger rose in proportion to her insolence. He would not stay with her, and he took a lamp and went up-stairs to the room overhead. Here he fetched his books, and prepared to pass the evening.

For a time his outraged feelings held him up. He

preferred solitude to her company. He would cease to be forbearing and indulgent. He would be harsh and inflexible, and teach her he was master. But this mood did not last—it could not, in such a breast as that of Horace Vincent's.

His anger began to die away. He was glad to think he had not answered her again. It was a comfort to reflect that no bitter words had heaped fuel on the fire. She would be sorry, he thought, to have him sit there alone. He fancied she would come stealing up to heal the breach. She must know that it was of her making. Hark! is not that her step? He is quite willing. His arms and heart are open. What he dreads most is domestic strife,

and the continual dropping which wears away the stone!

Surely, she will come. But no; that is not her step. She sits brooding below on her injuries. She is never likely to come. And presently she passes him on the stairs with averted face. And when he says, "Ruth," hoping, by the magic of the name to break the spell, she does not answer. And he goes back to his solitude, and hears the night wind moan down the street, as though it might have been the echo of his departing hopes: for he knows himself to be one of those hapless beings whose earthly happiness has gone down a wreck!

(To be continued.)

WORDS IN SEASON.

ARCHITECTURE.—II.

BY THE REV. CANON BATEMAN, M.A., VICAR OF MARGATE.

II.—THE BUTTRESSES.

 If you look externally at most of the houses of God in the land, you see that they are surrounded with buttresses which not only adorn, but support the fabric. These vary in form, but the object and result is in every case the same. Let us walk about the building with the Psalmist as our guide, and he will point out their several peculiarities: or let us realise their spiritual adaptation to the "citizen of Zion." It is said of him—

1. That he "walketh uprightly." That is, he does nothing that he is ashamed of. He has nothing to conceal. He is not afraid to look his neighbour in the face. Whatever he may have been in time past, he is sincere and without offence now. There is no hanging down of the head, no condemnation of the heart, no falling of the eye, no faltering of the tongue. The man means what he says, and does what he professes. He may not be a wise, rich, great, or influential man, but he is a true man—true to his word, true to his faith, true to his Saviour; a true penitent, a true believer, a true confessor! That is the man who "walketh uprightly."

2. He "worketh righteousness." He is a worker; not a talker, not an idler, not a dreamer." God says to him, "Go, work to-day in my vineyard," and he goes. It is a great mistake in religion for a man to be always thinking of himself, and feeling his own pulse. Some do this. Their own feelings from day to day, or from hour to hour, the throbbing of their spiritual affections, their sense of nearness to God or distance from him, these almost exclusively engross their attention. A morbid state of mind too generally follows, which acts upon the soul as hypochondriacal attacks do upon the body. Fancies look

like realities, and lead to the neglect of duties. The mind broods, and hatches hybrids. No good is done either for God or our neighbour.

No doubt self-examination is an important part of religion; but it is not religion itself. Force employment upon the "man of fancies," and he soon forgets them in urgent duties. It is much the same in religion. That man will have the best health who is "working righteousness." Whilst watering others, he will be watered himself.

3. He "speaketh the truth with his heart." The converse with a man's own heart is secret. No stranger intermeddles with what passes there. The busymachinery of the Northern mill is nothing compared with the complicated working of the human heart. Wheel within wheel in endless succession is constantly revolving for the accomplishment of our wishes and the attainment of our ends. Is all that passes there true? Do we speak the truth in our hearts? The citizen of Zion does. He has learnt that the secret of speaking truth with the lips is to speak it in the heart. Our blessed Lord teaches that "out of the heart of man proceedeth," amongst other evils, "false witness." When falsehood is cherished within, it will find vent without. Something unexpectedly occurs; we are taken by surprise; we are thrown off our guard; and out comes the untruth—sometimes in disguise, but untruth still. As in all other parts of the Divine life, the TRUE MAN must have a TRUE HEART.

4. He "backbiteth not with his tongue." This "backbiting" is an old but expressive word. A man's back is turned—he cannot hear, he cannot contradict, he cannot deny, he cannot resent; and one goes and speaks slanderous words of him, and injures his character, and darkens his fair

fame. Such words, so spoken, bite like "an adder's tooth," and inject poison into the wound. There is something base and cowardly in this conduct; something worse, because more secret, than in the next negative point—

5. He "doeth no evil to his neighbour." The last offence was secret; this is open. Both are held up as warnings; as also is the third and cognate matter which follows:—

6. "Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." We have here the "taking it up," instead of "letting it drop;" the "listening," instead of "rebuking;" the "repeating," instead of "forgetting;" the "gathering," instead of "scattering." Condemnation is thus passed upon a whole class of practices, which are closely connected and bear family likenesses—viz., the speaking evil, the spreading evil, and the doing evil. No distinction is made between them; all are common; all are bad; all are to be carefully avoided by the servant of God. They are "the little foxes which spoil the vines."

7. A pair of characteristics follow. In the eyes of the citizen of Zion "a vile person is contemned;" but "he honoureth them that fear the Lord." This recommends a mode of judgment which God's people sometimes forget. They are too ready to follow the world's judgment and to run with the multitude, whether they do evil or not. They will "bow down" before Haman, or "cover his face," according as the king smiles or frowns. They will let Mordecai sit neglected in the gate, or lead him through the city in state, according as the king neglects or favours. Mordecai is the same, and Haman is the same; but the esteem in which men hold them, and the treatment they bestow upon them, is not the same; nor do they judge righteous judgment. All this is further illustrated, in the present day, by the choice of our companions, the circle we move in, the friendships we endeavour to form. Our first inquiry ought to be whether their God is our God, their choice our choice, their Saviour our Saviour, their aim our aim—but is it so? Much depends upon our choice of friends and companions, and the circle in which we move. We are judged by these signs. We may think and complain of this as a hard measure. "Surely," we may say, "I may choose a friend or companion without thinking as he thinks, or doing what he does. Is it fair to make me accountable for it?" Yes, it is. You cannot choose a friend without being implicated and bound up with him. You cannot touch pitch without being defiled. You must abide in every case the consequences of your choice. If you were indeed a friend of Christ, you would feel no drawing towards his enemies. A vile person in your eyes would be contemned, and you would honour those who fear the Lord.

8. He "sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth

not." This is another characteristic. To change under the circumstances mentioned would be dishonourable, and no one should cherish a higher or a finer sense of honour than the true follower of Christ. You have come under some engagement in daily life, and have sealed it with an oath. You thought at the time it would prove profitable, and that you would reap some advantage. It turns out that you will be a loser. You must take the consequences; you must not shrink; you must stand to your word if you are a "Christian indeed."

9. He "putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent." Usurious interest is thus forbidden; nor must a reward be coveted for betraying an innocent person. It would have been well had Judas read and laid to heart this precept. Similar cases occur sometimes in the common course of life, and they are all met and regulated in this and other parts of God's Word.

These, then, are the buttresses which support the Christian as a building of God. They are not the grounds of his hope; they are not the foundation on which he rests; they are not what he pleads before God; they are not put in the balances to outweigh his misdeeds; they do not feed pride; they do not save, but they give him firmness and stability. "He that doeth these things shall never fall."

III.—THE STABILITY.

The man thus built up of God, thus founded upon Christ, thus enlightened by the Spirit, and thus buttressed by good works, is strong in heart, strong in habits, and strong in God.

1. Strong in heart. When a man has been all life long talking about his good heart, and his good conduct, and his good motives, and thus "ignorant of God's righteousness," has been going about to establish his own; when he has been laying some other foundation than that which has been laid in Zion; and saying, "Lord, Lord," without doing the things that are commanded him—he is never strong in heart. In quiet times he goes on well enough, perhaps; but the storm tries the building. Trouble is "hard at hand!" Sickness entereth into the chamber! Death standeth at the door! Now, then, for the strong heart; now for the conscience void of offence; now for the witness of the Spirit; now for the testimony that in simplicity and godly sincerity the man has had his conversation in the world. All these are greatly wanted, but, alas! they are not found. In their stead is found, what is perhaps the saddest of all things—a correct creed with a failing heart! It fails just when we want it to be most strong, just when it is most strong in the man who has not only "believed in God," but been "careful to maintain good works."

There may be much talk about his weakness and infirmities—about his negligences and ignorances; but though these humble the heart, they do not weaken it. They are all acknowledged and all mourned over; yet, still the heart is strong. The man has been what he professed to be, and he has done what he professed to do. He was not a deceiver. Our Saviour's commendation is applicable to him: he "has done what he could." He stretches out the hand to take hold on Christ, and to apprehend his free salvation, and it is not drawn back withered. He hears Christ's words, "Come up hither," and the strong heart reaches heaven.

2. He is strong in habits. They help to keep him from falling. Habit is what the strong stake is to the feeble stem—it keeps it from bending hither and thither; it enables it to strike its roots downward and bear fruit upward. "To him that hath," says our blessed Lord, "to him shall be given; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." Here we find the meaning of this somewhat ambiguous expression. You have love to Christ: it shall grow, grow as a rooted and grounded tree does—grow as love always does when good and true. You have good habits: they are there—they shall become strong. You are instant in prayer: the one spot is frequented, the one fixed hour is hallowed—you shall have power with God and prevail. You resist temptation: whenever it appears it is resisted: when down you keep it down—it shall grow weaker and weaker, gradually die

away, and cease to harass. The strength of the arm increases by reason of use; whereas by disuse it dwindles and loses what strength it has. So with the Christian, the more he has, the more he shall have; the better he is, the better he shall be. Form good habits, and they will strengthen the building so that it shall "never fall."

3. He is strong in God. The words which involve this do not merely express the opinion of a good, and holy, and inspired man, but they convey to us a promise of Almighty God. It is God himself who speaks and says, "He that doeth these things shall never fall." God looks upon him with "the favour which he beareth unto his people;" Christ prayeth for him that: "his faith fail not;" the Spirit helps his infirmities, and "maketh intercession for him with groanings which cannot be uttered." And in all this lies hid the secret of his stability. You might doubt about his "strong heart;" you might doubt about his "strong habits;" but you cannot doubt about his "strong Deliverer." It is not that the man shall never fall because he is so good; but that he shall never fall because God is so great—because God has promised to hold him up—because God never forgets his servant—because God loves with an everlasting love—because whom he predestinates, and calls, and justifies, and sanctifies, he also glorifies.

Oh, then, for strong hearts, strong habits, and strong promises, that every one who readeth, being taught of the Father, believing in the Son, and quickened by the Holy Spirit, may never fall!

A LONDONER'S HOLIDAY DREAM.

BY the golden path of the corn-clad plain,
By vale or hill-side seat,
When the harp awakes, and the lute's soft
strain
Comes borne o'er the waving wheat;

By the camp-like sheaf of the fertile ground,
When the light of the waning day
Hears the rustic mirth and the jocund sound
Of the happy reaper's lay.

When August moons that queenly rise
With clear and full-orbed light,
Look benignly down with auspicious eyes
And silver the fields of white;

In the gladdening spirit around us cast
We mix with the happy throng
Through some waving corn-field wander past,
And join in the reaper's song;

Or linger late on some sheaf-crowned way,
In the gloom of the stilly air,

When the wide, wide space our eyes survey,
Nor sound nor voice is there.

When we muse on the days now long since dead,
(Oh! days of no lessening ray!)
When bright August suns still onward led,
And bright paths before us lay!

When we dreamed of a spot where friends might
meet,
Where no penury could molest;
Not near, nor far from the world's wide street,
Where work could be blent with rest;

Where a little flock might be loved and love,
Apart from the city's din;
Where content might rest like a heaven-sent dove,
And mate with no thought of sin;

Where, not—as, alas! with to-morrow's sun,
Unfriendled, and alone,
'Neath the darksome arch our feet must run,
Through miles of brick and stone,—



(Drawn by W. RICE BUCKMAN.)

"What is to become of poor Lisa?"—p. 155.

Through winding alleys of ceaseless night,
Where children in piteous wail,
Seem to beg one look on the fields of light,
Or one breath of the briny gale ;

Where, stretched in poverty, dirt, and pain
(A case wherein is no guile),
The sick man lies, and the Word in vain
Seems to bid his sick face smile.

Alas ! for the town, its sorrows and sin,
Alas ! for its poverty double ;
Alas ! for the hearts that no love can win,
Alas ! for their turbulent trouble.

Oh ! flattering dream of our schoolboy days,
Blow wind of the rainy gust ;
Blow August gale 'cross the leaf-strewn ways,
Let the leaf lie down i' the dust ;—

As we linger late on the dewy lawn,
While the wind blows shrill and keen,
And see faint streaks of another dawn
Break the gloom of the midnight scene.

At that hour of hours, when the thoughtful one
Is fixed on the coming light,
When the watcher looks for another sun
To lighten this gloom of night. H. B.

L I S A ' S R I N G .

LFORMING a background to the dazzlingly clear waters of the fiord, whose wavelets sparkled and danced restlessly, as if in anxiety to reach and mingle with the ever-moaning ocean, were the dark, irregular masses of rocks and mountains of the Norwegian coast.

Out in the blinding sun of the hot summer, Lisa had been walking all day, wandering listlessly on till she had reached the lake, the neighbourhood of which was rendered delightfully cool by the shelter of the overhanging rocks.

It was an unquestionably lovely face that greeted Lisa as she bent over the edge of the lake, and peered into the clear, deep water. The hair was only like threads of gold, there, in the gleams of brightness that had penetrated even to this sheltered spot, and as it tumbled over her shoulders it parted and fell into great soft rings. Her eyes were large and blue, and the mouth was arched and tender-looking; yet about both these latter features there was a slight expression of melancholy that at times looked almost like discontent.

Lisa had a secret trouble. She knew that, in other people's eyes, it was of so trivial a nature that she had never ventured to mention it; yet to herself it was all important.

Her father and mother were hard-working, and even common—common in their mode of speech and living, and common in appearance. She was beautiful; her hands were white and delicate as any lady's, for she had never worked with them any more than to sometimes mend her own coarse garments. Her mother, in foolish fondness for her only child, had ever studied to spare Lisa any pain or trouble; and as the child showed a distaste for every kind of work, she had grown up, although a poor man's child, more idle than many a rich lady. As might be expected, Lisa was not ignorant of her own loveliness, and during the

past winter months she had taken to wondering what her future would be. She had heard her mother say that they were descended from a German baron, which was likely enough; but Lisa, in her ignorance, thought that such a descent ought to make her a very great lady. This thought had given rise to another: Whom should she marry? Not any of those common fellows she met at her father's house, although she knew that there was one who was breaking his heart for her worthless self. She could not marry to work hard, and make her hands rough and red, as her mother had done; if she married at all it must be some rich gentleman, who could dress her in silks and lace, and give her rings that would set off her pretty hands. A little smile of self-satisfaction would steal over her face as she thought how well she would look in the white silk, with lace veil and wreath of orange-flowers, that she had so often dreamed about. And now I have told you Lisa's trouble.

Though Lisa was but nineteen, she was beginning to grow weary of her maiden life, and to long for the meeting with the gentleman who was to be her husband. This afternoon she was wondering when he would appear, she hoped before long, or she would have passed the years of her greatest beauty, and she would like him to see her in her freshness and youth.

But Lisa's temperament was not naturally melancholy, and in her delight at finding out this cool retreat she was beginning to forget her trouble.

"What a lovely place this is for hot weather!" she exclaimed; "and how clear this fiord is, I can see quite down to the bottom, though it is very deep."

As Lisa finished speaking, she looked up in surprise, and turned very slightly red. She looked even more surprised as she looked round her and discovered no one. Certainly she had heard some

one speaking. However, she soon overcame her surprise, and began singing a merry strain in a very sweet voice.

"What was that?" Lisa listened a moment. A distant sound of her own song came floating along to her, ending but a second or so after her own tones had ceased, as if the unknown singer had taken up the song just after she had commenced. Lisa was delighted and flattered. No common man could have so musical a voice; "It must be a gentleman." It never entered Lisa's head that it might be a lady's voice.

"I wish whoever it is would go on," thought Lisa; but she listened in vain; so, in her anxiety to hear the sweet sounds again, she re-commenced her song, taking care not to change it for another, that the stranger might not be acquainted with.

Again the sounds were borne along on the still air, back to Lisa. Lisa ceased to listen; the voice also ceased. Lisa sang another song; the voice took it up. Lisa was more than ever astonished, and began lowering her voice very gradually, so that the stranger might not hear when she left off. The voice also grew fainter, and died away in a whisper immediately after Lisa had broken off her strain. More strange than all, Lisa sang no tune, but just such notes as her fancy prompted. The voice repeated them, and when she left off, it also discontinued. Lisa was exceedingly puzzled. Perhaps some idea of the gentleman who was coming to marry her, prompted her to pick her way over the sharp, rugged rocks which lay in the direction from whence the mysterious voice had sounded.

The rocks were sharp; so sharp that their rough edges pierced through the soles of Lisa's shoes, and cut her feet. Nevertheless, she kept bravely on her difficult way, scarcely heeding the pain which her bleeding feet were occasioning her. There was a reason for Lisa's bravery. Might not this be the turning-point of her life? She felt a sort of presentiment that she was going on to meet her fate, and for such a consideration of what account was a little bodily pain?

As she picked her way along, she looked round her into every little nook or cranny formed by the irregular grouping of the rocks, but as yet she discovered no traces of the unknown, for whom she was—well, not exactly searching, but whom she was expecting to meet.

As Lisa proceeded, the way became more difficult, the rocks were more rugged, and there was less and less shelter from the fierce sun of the short, though intensely hot, Norwegian summer. Suddenly Lisa was seized with a fit of dizziness. She had come too far from the sanded shores of the lake to be able to get back with this faintness upon her; so she stumbled on, hoping to find soon a resting-place for her aching limbs. But as she

moved wearily along, the rocks seemed to grow more jagged, and the glare of the sun more intensely painful.

Lisa was growing frightened. What should she do? No soul was in sight, and already she could scarce drag herself along. The bare, burning rocks were a hard resting-place, and every moment she was growing fainter and weaker. She drew up her foot to step over a sharp ledge of rock, but the movement had been so languid, her foot struck, and she fell over. Lying there on that hard bed, with the cruel sun shining over her smilingly as ever, kindling the masses of silken hair into a ruddy glory, and tracing out against the dark rock the exquisite contour of the lifeless face, what is to become of poor Lisa?

At Lisa's home anxious hearts were awaiting her return; yet, perhaps, no heart was so anxious as that of Frederic Herman, a young man who had long sighed in vain for a mark of Lisa's favour. None of the little household knew whither she had gone, so that a search would stand but little chance of meeting with success. Frederic was too uneasy to remain in a state of inactivity. He could do no good by remaining where he was, and there was the possibility that he might do much if he went in search of her.

Actuated by this thought, Frederic started off in the hot sun along the dusty roads. He might have wandered on till nightfall, had it not been for a fortunate accident. One of Lisa's friends, passing along on the roadway at the top of the cliff, had, with wonderfully keen eyes, descried Lisa scrambling, as she described it, over the rocks below.

At this information, which was volunteered with extreme volubility, Frederic began to feel seriously alarmed, for he knew the danger of the sharp rocks. As he traversed the solitary and difficult footing, he fancied he could discern a small speck; by degrees the speck assumed the shape of a human figure, and as he drew near he recognised the garments of poor Lisa.

When Lisa opened her eyes it was to encounter the gaze of a pair of honest, loving eyes, and to feel the pressure of two strong arms. She was too weak to make any resistance, so she lay back quietly, and contented herself with taking a survey of the strange furniture and wondering whose house she was in, for Frederic had actually carried her over the rocks to a house that stood but a little distance from the spot where Lisa had been overtaken by her fainting fit.

As Lisa lay thus quietly, she began to think whether or not this accident of hers, from which she had so narrowly escaped, might not be a warning to her to show her that if she indulged in such discontent as she had lately, she would surely reap the reward of her sin, for Lisa had had the

benefit of a Christian training from her mother, and in her moments of reflection she generally arrived at a right conclusion as to her own conduct. Well for Lisa had been this event! Hers was not the mind to let its warning pass unheeded. Lisa had at last found the true method for dismissing from her heart the secret trouble that had latterly weighed upon it; at least, such a conclusion may be fairly drawn from the intense happiness that suddenly shone in Frederic's face, and the as sudden disappearance of the discontented melancholy that had, but a short time since, marred the loveliness of Lisa's features. With the knowledge of the silliness, and even wickedness, of her former vanity, had come another knowledge: this it was that brought happiness to Frederic.

It was some time before Lisa could overcome her self-shame sufficiently to tell Frederic the whole of her strange adventure. She was scarcely

prepared for his thorough enjoyment of it, and was feeling rather inclined to resent such strange behaviour.

"Have you never solved the mystery yet?" he asked, laughingly.

"Never," answered Lisa, somewhat puzzled.

"Did you never hear of the Echo Rocks, and have lived so near them?"

Lisa was as much amused as Frederic at this explanation. "So this was the fate that I had a presentiment I should meet on that eventful day!" she exclaimed.

"If you mean the echo, no; if you mean me, yes," answered Frederic, saucily, glancing down at a ring scarcely distinguishable from the long soft hair that showered down her shoulders and rested on her hands. For Lisa wore a ring, the reality of which was far more precious than even her dreams of the rings she was to have as a gentleman's wife had been.

L. M. C.

WITNESSES FROM THE DEAD.

TYRE.

TYRE was Phœnician Rome, the mart of commerce, the scene of industry, the emporium of art, and the mother of Carthage. One hundred and thirty years before it fell Isaiah delineated its predicted ruin. About seventy years before, Amos prophesied its destruction. Ezekiel writes (xxvi. 4, 12, and 14): "They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water, and I will also scrape her dust from her. I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets on."

Nebuchadnezzar, after a siege which lasted thirteen years, took Tyre and utterly destroyed it. The Rev. W. Jowett, speaking from personal observation, says: "On this deserted shore not one sight, not one sound, remains to bear witness to her former joyousness and pride. Of ancient Tyre there just remains that utter nothing which seems best suited to prepare the Christian for imbibing the spirit of the prophetic language."

Before Jowett's visit in 1823, Bishop Pococke wrote: "There are no signs of the ancient city, and as it is a sandy shore the face of everything is altered."

Dean Goode justly states: "Old Tyre, destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, was a city on the sea-coast, but connected with an island about half a mile from the shore, which had become even then an important part of Tyre. When Old Tyre was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, many of the inhabitants fled to this island, which had originally formed but a suburb, as it were, of the city, and here, according

to the prophetic announcement of Isaiah, Tyre at the appointed time revived."

This, its subsequent revival, was thus predicted by the Prophet Isaiah: "And it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing, and the Lord will visit Tyre."

At the end of the captivity in Babylon and the extinction of the Babylonian empire, the Tyrians restored to liberty, inaugurated in New Tyre a career of prosperity that rivalled that of Old Tyre in former times. Of this Tyre Ezekiel says: "When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise."

Isaiah utters a remarkably joyous prediction relative to this city—"Her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord." Has this splendid prophecy any exact and attested fulfilment? Let us see. Our Lord preached in Tyre; St. Paul found Christians there, and enjoyed their hospitality. During the persecution under Diocletian, Tyre furnished a great number of martyrs who yielded up their lives for Christ. Hence Eusebius, the historian, writes: "Since a church of God has been founded in Tyre many of its gains obtained by merchandise are consecrated to the Lord, being offered to this church, the gainers offering them as an act of religion."

But it subsequently decayed in character, in religion, and in divine life. Hence God declared, in Ezekiel, "I will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come

up." After various vicissitudes New Tyre was captured by the Saracens A.D. 639, re-captured by the Christians A.D. 1124, and finally razed to its foundations by the Mamelukes A.D. 1291; the Turks took possession A.D. 1516, and during their occupation Tyre has become, as predicted, "like the top of a rock, a place to spread nets on."

But the page of prophecy does not predict great results only, it gives the minutest details. Ezekiel writes: "They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water." Accordingly, when Alexander laid siege to New Tyre, he constructed a causeway from the main land to the island out of the ruins of Old Tyre, laying on it the dust and *débris* on which it stood. Ezekiel also states: "I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee; it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth." Alexander set fire to New Tyre after he had conquered it, by throwing firebrands into the houses, and thus destroying them.

God proclaims by Joel the prophet: "I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the Lord hath spoken it." Accordingly, we find it recorded in history that Alexander, enraged at the protracted defence made by the inhabitants, sold 30,000 of them for slaves.

Thus Tyre in ruins remains a witness from the dead to the minute accuracy of the "sure word of prophecy," and no less to the great fact that God deals with nations and capitals and kingdoms in time, rewarding and punishing in this dispensation according to their historic character. He reigns and rules amid the nations. His word is truth. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle shall not pass away from the Word of God, till all has been fulfilled. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

These ruins we have so fully described thus far, prove that justice and truth and righteousness are the weightiest interests of nations, and that ambition, avarice, and unjustifiable war weave the shrouds and dig the graves of nations, however materially strong. Glory is lost when justice is violated, or virtue persecuted, or wrong inflicted. Athens sunk into a village, Carthage buried in the sand, Babylon represented by a few molten bricks, Tyre a bare rock, Egypt perpetuated in gigantic tombs or pyramids, Venice with its palatial steps now covered over with seaweeds,—all proclaim that the vital element of national greatness is moral not material, and that every attempt to reverse this great law has recoiled on the experimentalist in ruin and remorse. The mark of decadence is visible where trumpets sounded forth prophecies of immortality; names that once shook the world

are forgotten. The free cities of Flanders are cities of the dead. The phalanx of Macedon, the legions of Rome, the guards of Napoleon, did little to perpetuate and much to overturn the dynasties to which they belonged: the foundations of empires that endure are composed of better and more lasting materials.

These truths are echoed from the ruins of ancient capitols, from the graves of buried cities, from the annals of nations, and from the Word of God. May our own beloved land lay these things to heart, and through the practice of these seek what she will thus attain—the brightest place in Europe, and the most lasting sovereignty of all the nations of the earth. History speaks to nations as directly as to individuals, and to both it proclaims the great canon which all experience justifies, "Righteousness exalteth a nation."

We find the prophet's predictions of the entire desolation of Tyre most exactly fulfilled; but it is important to observe that the fulfilment arises from causes none but God, or men inspired by him, could foresee.

Among the causes not in operation in the days of the prophets, which have taken all her greatness from Tyre, and rendered her restoration to her lost supremacy impossible, are first of all the discovery of the electric needle or mariner's compass. The seaman can thenceforth leave the shore and launch out into the deep; a Columbus discover America; a Diaz reach the Cape of Good Hope. The commerce of the East is now carried on the waves, and the dead cities, among which is Tyre, never can be of any great commercial use or value.

Freedom and mutual commercial intercourse, beyond the reach of the tyrant's will or the Bedouin's plundering passions, have opened up free and unobstructed channels to commerce, and left Tyre and its sister emporia of ancient merchandise not only useless, but absolutely unsuitable. The ports of western Asia, of which Tyre was one, the theatres of commerce and navigation, peopled by an industrious people, have all decayed and they will continue to decay irretrievably to the end, according to the sure word of prophecy; and the discoveries of modern civilisation have not only diverted the fleets of Europe and America from those ports, but rendered it impossible for commerce ever to revisit them.

These existing ruins attest the historic fulfilment of all predicted to overtake them, and the discoveries of new continents and islands, and of new modes of asserting man's supremacy over the sea, show that it is impossible that Tyre and Sidon can ever rise from the dead, or do more than witness to the end of time in silent and sublime eloquence to the truth of prophecy and the inspiration of the prophets. These dead witnesses exist; they can be examined and heard; these books of stone

live and may be read; they are exact transcripts in ruin of the records of the sacred penmen.

"I would," says Stephens, "that the sceptic could stand, as I did, among the ruins of Tyre, and there open the sacred Book, and read the words of the inspired penmen, written when this desolate city was one of the greatest cities in the world.

I see the scoff arrested, his cheek pale, his lip quivering, and his heart quaking with fear, as the ancient city cries out to him in a voice loud and powerful as of one risen from the dead; and though he will not believe Moses and the prophets, he believes the handwriting of God in the desolation and eternal ruin around him."

A PICTURE.

HAIL, Face of Christ, that shinest down on me
With one long benediction in Thine eyes,
Although Thy brow is deadly white to see,
And Thy dear lips are rent apart with sighs!
And is there such a darkness in the skies
As hideth all the Father's smile from Thee?
And are the taunts of men too fierce to be

Unheeded by the Meekest and All-Wise?
Ah! I bow down, I wonder as who sees
Some mystery beneath all mysteries—

The Infinite having end; Death closing round
The Everlasting Glory! . . . Daily I plod

The galleries, yet never have I found
So sweet a picture of my Lord and God. B.

A VISIT TO "THE FARM."

A STORY FOR ALL LITTLE GIRLS WHO CAN SEE TO READ.

He, mamma! do look. Is not that a lovely carriage?" cried Rosa Lindsey, as she and her mother were walking through one of the great squares at the west end of London; "and, oh! look at the young lady inside, is she not beautiful? and she has such a lovely hat, and blue velvet jacket, with her golden curls all round her neck."

"That nice-looking lady by her side is her governess, I dare say."

"Don't you wish, mamma, that we had just such a carriage, with prancing horses, and servants in livery?"

"We should be thankful for the many comforts we possess, and not envy those who are above us, and who, perhaps, have sorrows of which we know nothing."

"But what sorrow can that young lady have? I wish I were she, and had all those fine things, and a governess to educate me, and to teach me to play the piano and speak French."

"The Almighty knows what is best for us," replied Mrs. Lindsey, as she hastened with her little daughter through the crowded thoroughfare that led to the house of business for which she worked.

Having reached it, they entered, and soon after came out again, each carrying a bundle of calico and flannel garments to make with the sewing-machine, which was Mrs. Lindsey's chief means of support for herself and two daughters, of whom Rosa was the youngest.

She was the widow of a railway clerk, who died of cholera three years before the time of which we are

speaking; her eldest daughter, who was fifteen years of age, worked for a dressmaker, and little Rosa, who had been her father's pet, helped her mother, as well as she was able, in the household work and other necessary tasks, besides being able to tack for the machine, close seams, and make button-holes almost as well as her mother.

Poor Mrs. Lindsey heaved many a sigh when she thought of Rosa's neglected education, for beyond writing a copy once a day, and reading the Scripture morning and evening, there was no time to spare from the labour necessary to their subsistence. But within the last six months, Rosa, who was now twelve years old, had grown tall and slight, and as Mrs. Lindsey looked at the pale face, and listened to the hacking cough, she could not help wishing that her child might have the benefit of country air.

To vary the monotony of a life of toil, she sometimes took Rosa with her when she went to fetch or carry home her work. Yet many persons are worse off than Mrs. Lindsey, for she obtained the means of living in moderate comfort, thanks to the invention which has diminished the toil and augmented the profits of the seamstress. We need scarcely say that she knew this, and was duly grateful to Providence.

On reaching home, her landlady met her with a letter, which had arrived during her absence. This was a surprise; the widow had but few correspondents, and great was her delight, on opening it, to find that it contained a Post-office order for two pounds, from her husband's sister, Mrs. Slater, who lived in the country, and also an invitation for Rosa to come and spend a month at "The Farm."

Mrs. Lindsey's eyes overflowed with joy and thankfulness, and the colour came and went in Rosa's pale cheeks, as she exclaimed, "Oh, how delightful! when am I to go?" Then changing pale again, she said, "But how can I leave you? who will help you at home?"

"We must ask Miss White to spare your sister Mary of an afternoon to help me with the tacking and closing."

This being happily arranged, and a new frock bought and made for Rosa out of the Post-office order sent to defray her travelling expenses, on a fine July morning, in a fever of excitement, she was accompanied by her mother and Mary to the railway station, where her ticket being duly purchased, she was placed under the care of a passenger, who was going to the same village.

Of Rosa's sensations her own letter shall speak; it arrived the next evening by the late post, and, to her credit, contained but few errors of spelling, and few blots.

FIRST LETTER.

"My Dear Mamma,—You know that this is almost the first letter I ever wrote, and I have so many pleasant things to tell I hardly know how to begin. First, though I was so glad, I was very sorry to leave you, and I could not help crying a little; then Mr. Green, who was so kind as to take charge of me, told me to look at the men cutting down the grass to make hay, and so I did, and there were the lovely roses and honeysuckles in the hedges, and bachelors' buttons, and all manner of flowers, glittering with drops of dew just like diamonds. Afterwards, I heard the lark singing up in the sky, as if it was going up to heaven with a morning hymn. Then the stations were so pretty, with flowers and geraniums all about them; and Mr. Green told me such funny stories, and bought me such a nice cake at a place they call Banbury.

"I think I went to sleep after this. When I woke, we had got to the end of our journey, and aunt and uncle had come to meet us in the chaise-cart. Well, we all went home, Mr. Green and all, to The Farm. It is such a nice place—quite a large house, all over roses and fuchsias, and in the middle of a garden full of fruit-trees and vegetables. We had our tea in an arbour, shaded with trees and honeysuckles; and afterwards I went to see the hens and the chickens, and the rabbits and the pigs.

"Aunt is so kind, and so is uncle, and I sleep in such a dear little room, next to aunt's, all dimity curtains, and little diamond panes in the windows, with the flowers growing over them. This morning I took a walk with uncle, and we went into Esdaile Park. There is a grand house in it. Sir Charles and Lady Esdaile live there. They have only one little girl, about as old as me, and all this fine place,

with a lot of money besides, will be hers some day! Mustn't she be happy, mamma? How I wish you were rich, like her papa and mamma. Aunt says she will take me there, for she knows the house-keeper, though the family are in London.

"But I must not write any more, for fear of losing the post, so good-bye, dear mamma, with love and kisses to Mary and yourself—from your little Rosa."

SECOND LETTER.

"My Dear Mamma,—I have been to Esdaile Park, and— But I must begin at the beginning, and tell you, first, Sir Charles and Lady Esdaile came home from London last week, and the footman brought a message for aunt to bring me to spend a day with Miss Nora. Oh! how my heart beat at the thought! I said to aunt, 'Perhaps she will be too proud and too grand to like a poor girl like me; and I have nothing to wear but my new violet frock; and she will be so handsomely dressed.' 'Miss Nora, poor dear, will care nothing about what frock you wear,' said aunt, and she sighed. I wondered what she meant; but there was no time to ask, because aunt had to fold the things from the wash before we went, and I helped her. When we had done, and put them in the basket, ready for the mangle, we made haste and got dressed, when we bid uncle good-bye. I said, 'I'm so afraid, for I've never spoken to a grand young lady like Miss Esdaile.' 'No need to be afraid of her, poor thing!' and uncle shook his head.

"All this puzzled me; I could not think why they should pity any one so rich and so grand. However, we set off, and the sight of the lovely trees, and the deer browsing on the grass under them, took it out of my mind, until we got all among the fountains and the flower-beds. Then we went up the white marble steps that led on to the terrace, and there my heart beat more than ever; for we saw Lady Esdaile and Miss Nora coming to meet us; but when we came quite near I saw that she was just as kind and nice as you, only she had such a handsome silk dress on, and looked, I thought, unhappy. But Nora—Miss Esdaile, I mean—when I looked at her—what do you think, mamma? she was the very same little girl that we saw in the grand carriage in the square. She was dressed in white, and with her fair golden curls, and her large, bright blue eyes, looked just like an angel. Lady Esdaile led her to me, and said, oh! so sadly, for she saw me change colour, 'Nora will be very pleased to have your company, my dear, but she cannot see you; she is blind!' Oh, mamma! *blind!* is not that dreadful? and, you know, I envied her so.

"Well, after that, we went into Nora's school-room, which was full of books; and there was Miss Morton, Nora's governess—the same lady that was with her in the carriage that day. After we had

taken luncheon—it was brought up on a silver tray, but I could scarcely touch any of the nice things, my heart was so full—Miss Morton, seeing I was overcome, said, ‘ You may have a holiday this afternoon, Nora, and spend it in the garden with your young friend.’ Then we went out together, and I wondered how we should find our way, as I had never been there before, and Nora could not see. But she took a light staff in her hand, with which she touched the ground now and then as she threaded her way through the walks and avenues, till we came to an arbour, all covered with roses and clematis, and there were lilies of the valley in the beds round it. Then Nora stopped and said, ‘ Let us sit down here, this is my bower.’

“ When I was sitting in that sweet place, and looking at Nora’s beautiful face, something came over me, and I burst into tears. ‘ Why do you cry?’ asked she; for she heard my sobs. ‘ Because I am so sorry,’ I replied. ‘ You are sorry for me, Rosa, are you not, because I am blind?’ ‘ Oh, yes!’ I answered. ‘ Do not be sorry. I have much to be thankful for.’ ‘ But how did it happen?’ said I, still crying. ‘ I will tell you. It was all through a frightful railway accident. Several people were killed, and many more seriously injured. Something struck my head, and I knew nothing for a long time. When I came to my senses again, I was quite blind.’ ‘ But will you never regain your sight?’ asked I. ‘ The doctors think not,’ she replied. ‘ Oh, dear, dear! you must be very unhappy.’ ‘ I was at first, for it happened only two years ago. But since dear Miss Morton has come to live with me, I am quite happy; for she has learned how to instruct the blind, and she teaches me so many things, and reads and talks to me, so that I am never dull. And you know it would have been much worse had it happened to a poor girl, who was required to work for her living. Now I can have the pleasure of doing good, and helping to lessen the misfortunes of other people.’ Then I told her how I had seen and envied her in London, at which she laughed, and said, ‘ You must know, Rosa, dear, that we never need envy any one, for everybody has trials. This life, Miss Morton says, is only a passage to a better. But now let us go into the hayfield; it is quite a treat, you know, to have you to play with me.’

“ After this Nora seemed to forget her blindness, and we had rare fun, throwing the hay about, and burying one another in it, while Cupid and Flo, the pretty pet spaniels, scampered about, and came and put their noses in Nora’s face. After tea she played and sang to me, and showed me her work, and how she wrote with a frame, and read in books with raised letters. Then we went into the garden again, and gathered flowers to make aunt a nosegay, and afterwards walked about and talked till it was time

for aunt and I to go home. Then I had to bid Nora good-bye, as I must you, dear mamma, remaining ever your loving little girl. “ ROSA LINDSEY.”

THIRD LETTER.

“ Joy, joy! dear mamma, I am so happy! I hope you’ll consent to what this dear Nora has proposed; but I must tell you. She has asked her papa and mamma to let you come and live in a pretty cottage in the park. You are to do Lady Esaile’s fine work, and to have butter and milk from the dairy, and fruit and vegetables from the garden. My sister Mary is to come and help you, and I—oh! mamma, won’t you be glad!—I am to go every day and play with Nora, and learn of Miss Morton. And so God has made me quite ashamed of my wicked envy; for I see that others whom I fancy so much happier than myself are really bearing great troubles with patience and resignation to the will of God.” M. W.

“THE QUIVER” BIBLE CLASS.

81. What tribe furnished the counsellors of Israel?
82. Give a proof that Jacob believed in a future state.
83. What is the first recorded occasion upon which “the terror of God” was exercised on behalf of his chosen people?
84. The destroying angel is mentioned three times in the Old Testament.
85. Who said, “There is but a step between me and death?”
86. How many times is Eve mentioned by name in the Bible?
87. How long did the first plague sent by God upon the Egyptians last?
88. God once said to a king, that if he did not liberate the Lord’s son, God would slay his firstborn.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 143.

71. During a three years’ sojourn in Arabia (Gal. i. 17).
72. 1 Cor. xv. 6. Since St. Paul said these 500 saw him “at once,” it could only be the disciples of Galilee, for at his ascension the disciples at Jerusalem, who seem to have accompanied him to the place of ascension, numbered 120 (Acts i. 15).
73. Ezek. xxx. 13.
74. Neh. ii. 4.
75. Neh. v. 7.
76. 1 Kings xi. 29.
77. Ezek. xxvii. 12.
78. Deal, cedar, and oak (Ezek. xxvii. 5, 6).
79. Daniel (Ezek. xxviii. 3).
80. Gen. xli. 45.